

Governor Riley Declares State of Emergency Due to Approaching Hurricane, Requests Federal Assistance

CLANTON - Governor Bob Riley on Sunday declared an official state of emergency in Alabama due to the imminent threat posed by Hurricane Katrina. The emergency declaration enables the Governor to invoke various emergency preparedness measures including Alabama's price gouging law.

In addition, Governor Riley also asked President Bush to issue an "expedited major disaster declaration" for six counties in the southwestern part of Alabama as Hurricane Katrina continued its approach.

The six counties are: Mobile, Baldwin, Washington, Clarke, Choctaw and Sumter. Other counties could be added later.

"Based upon current information, these counties are likely to receive the most significant damage in Alabama from the hurricane," Governor Riley said.

"The state is estimating cost figures in the excess of several million dollars. As soon as conditions allow, the state will be requesting post-disaster damage assessment assistance," the Governor wrote in his request to the President.

A federal disaster declaration would open up a number of different types of federal resources for the state. Under a federal declaration, storm victims would be able to apply for various types of assistance measures including temporary housing assistance, individual family grants, loans and grants to repair homes and businesses, and disaster unemployment assistance.

Alabama's price gouging law applies only during times of a state of emergency issued by the Governor.

"Those who engage in price gouging will be punished to the fullest extent of the law," Governor Riley warned.

Governor Riley and Alabama Emergency Management Agency Director Bruce Baughman have been in close contact with local emergency management officials in counties throughout the state to discuss storm preparations.